COLCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET WORKSHOP 2

Saturday March 9,2024
9:00 AM
Colchester Elementary School Café
(Livestream on YouTube Channel)

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TOWN CLERK

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Alexander Oliphant, Vice-Chair Christopher Rivers, Secretary Margo Gignac, Donna Antonacci, Michelle Millington, Rosemary Gignac and Stefanie Tracey-Calash.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Superintendent Daniel P. Sullivan, III, Assistant Superintendent Jessica L. Kuckel, Director of Pupil Services Eve Hurley, Assistant Direct of Pupil Services Rebecca Tedesco, Bacon Academy (BA) Principal Amy Begué, BA Assistant Principal Melissa Cry, BA Assistant Principal Michael Mal, William J Johnston Middle School (WJJMS) Principal Christopher Bennet, WJJMS Assistant Principal Stacy Ewing, Jack Jackter Intermediate School (JJIS) Principal Elise Butson, JJIS Assistant Principal Jennifer Reynolds, Colchester Elementary School (CES) Principal Judy O'Meara and CES Assistant Principal Megan Adamo.

OTHERS PRESENT: Business Director Rachel Linkkila and Instructional Technology Coordinator Barbara Johnson

1. MEETING OPENING

1.1 Call to Order
Chair Alexander Oliphant called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM

1.2 Roll Call
Chair Oliphant conducted a roll call of the Board

1.3 Pledge of Allegiance

2. *PRIORITY DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

2.1 *Principal and Directors Presentation
Superintendent Sullivan introduced Assistant Superintendent Jessica Kuckel to start the presentation. Assistant Superintendent Kuckel spoke to district goals, budget drivers, class size and academic performance. Director of Pupil Services Eve Hurley spoke about pupil services priorities and needs

including quality IEPs, practices and procedures, specialized programming and professional development. She also spoke to Colchester's High Need Learners scores and the comparison of their scores to the scores of other districts within Colchester's DRG. CES Principal Judy O'Meara talked about enrollment and its effects on staffing and the rigorous regular education in reading and math instruction. She also spoke on initiatives to make sure that all members of the school system feel, valued, accepted and connected. Principal O'Meara also shared the academic achievement for all students through the implementation of high-quality curriculum and programs to meet high standards for individual growth and school programs that encourage involvement and foster community pride. JJIS Principal Elise Butson spoke about enrollment and its effect on staffing, JJIS priorities including achievement and impacts, connected community of learners and impacts, and the overall growth of students at JJIS. WJJMS Principal Christopher Bennet shared highlights from 23-24, WJJMS anticipated projections, student achievement and impacts, and connected community of learners. BA Principal Amy Begué spoke to BA projections, budget priorities, student progress and the graduate profile.

2.2 *Discussion Regarding Budget Workshop Meeting 1 2/27/2024
C. Rivers question how the workshop would be organized. Superintendent Sullivan explained that 2.2 is for discussion, 2.3 is for if a motion is to be maid and 2.4 is for more discussion. M. Millington thanked administrators for the presentation and their efforts. She also spoke to school safety, student achievement and staffing. D. Antonacci asked when the public would get a chance to speak. Superintendent Sullivan explained that because it is a special meeting addition to the agendas can not be done however the reorder of the agenda could be done.

Motion by: M. Gignac
To move 3.1 public comments be moved to 2.2a.
Second: D. Antonacci
Further Discussion: None
Roll Call: All in favor
Vote: Motion carried

2.2a Brain Martin (34 Heatherwood Dr) thanked everyone for the presentation and shared his support for a turf field. Vincent Rose (161 Shadbush Dr) spoke in support of the turf field. He asked that the school be fully funded and pointed out that it is not going to get cheaper with declining enrollment. Susannah Milner (200 Bulkeley Hill Rd) thanked the administrators for their time and spoke about opportunities that are no longer offered at the schools, in particular theater and the importance of theater in a school setting. Nicole McKenzie (113 Bull Hill Rd) spoke about the why the school district needs a turf field and the need to maintain the buildings including the Bacon Academy's roof. Christine Cerniglia (163 Amston Rd) emailed about providing students with a safe place to play and supports a turf field. William "Skip" Starks (712 Fieldstone Court) emailed about maintenance that needs to be done at the schools and on the fields. Jeremy McKenzie (113 Bull Hill Rd) thanked everyone for the presentation spoke to the need to do repairs at the schools, the decrease in budgets over the years, the need for better fields, after school buses for activities, funding for special education, and competitive salary compensation. Kai Ruitto (Bacon Academy Student) spoke to how bad the fields are and some events have been cancelled because the fields were not useable. Luke Mccoy (141 Oak Farm Dr) spoke to the grounds and maintenance and maintenance supplies line items in the proposed 2024-2025 budget. Karen Belding (45 Deer Run Dr) thanked the board for the hard work that they have done to make sure that students are getting great opportunities. Jacob Cerniglia (Bacon Academy Student) spoke to the poor condition of the fields and how important it is to get a turf field.

Motion by: M. Gignac
Moved to take a 10-minute recess
Second: S. Tracey-Calash
Further Discussion: None
Roll Call: All in favor
Vote: Motion carried

Recessed at 10:31am
Returned to secession at 10:44am

2.2 (continued) C. Rivers asked if there are any large contracts outstanding. Superintendent Sullivan said that there are not any outstanding contracts. C. Rivers stated that he doesn't think that the board should adopt a budget without an approved Capital Plan. C. Rivers asked what the Registered Behavioral Technician (RBT) are and why we need them. Director of Pupil Services Eve Hurley explained that RBTs meet the needs of students with very complicated needs with in the school district in a very creative and cost-effective way. C. Rivers wanted to confirm that the school district gets reimbursed with excess cost for only costs over 4.5 that of per pupil cost and at 70%. Eve Hurley confirmed that this was correct and that we will receive excess cost for all students that are eligible. C. Rivers asked if the State has published the rate for next year. Eve Hurley and Superintendent Sullivan both confirmed that the school district does not have that number. C. Rivers explained that the excess cost goes to the town as revenue and that number is needed to determine the mill rate. S. Tracey-Calash asked if the per pupil cost was actually the Colchester's per pupil cost. Eve Hurley confirmed that it is our district's per pupil cost. C. Rivers asked if students coming from other school districts pay for the additional special educational services that they receive. Eve Hurley confirmed that out of district students sending districts do pay for the additional special education costs. C. Rivers spoke to the comprehensive capital plan that the Board of Education is presenting on Tuesday along with the maintenance issues including the Bacon Academy roof and Athletic Complex. C. Rivers asked if there was any update on the HVAC grant. Superintendent Sullivan updated the board on the most recent email he received from the state. C. Rivers asked why the overall maintenance budget and could there be an explanation provided for this. Superintendent Sullivan explained that he had met a commitment to the public to stay within the 3% to 4% range. C. Rivers asked what the budget would look like if money was added back in. Superintendent Sullivan responded that it depended on which projects within the Capital Improvement Plan they decided to take on. C. Rivers spoke to the savings that could be found in Central Office with some restructuring should go towards the maintenance budget. Superintendent Sullivan spoke to the possibility to use end of year funds towards maintenance projects. C. Rivers wants to put as much money in the maintenance budget that we can. C. Rivers asked about the application for Magnet Schools and wanted to make sure that we did not include the reductions in this budget. Superintendent Sullivan spoke to the positives that the Magnet School is going to have the financials for the district. C. Rivers spoke to bring keeping the budget as status quo at this time but he would like to see in the future a budget that brings back programs that the districts have lost from budget reductions. M. Millington asked about the decrease in line item 11 of the Historical Budget Comparison Other Employee Benefits. Rachel Linkkila responded that the line item is down because there is less teacher retirement payout this year then prior years. Superintendent Sullivan explained that the sick time payout has been negotiated out of the contract. M. Millington asked as to why line 19 Other Supplies/Materials is up. Rachel Linkkila explained that other supplies includes curriculum implementation and any supplies that are not instructional supplies. M. Millington asked why Tech Transportation was up. Superintendent Sullivan said that it was purely contractual. M. Millington asked why electricity has increased. Andrew Barillari Director of Educational Operations explained that the increase was because of delivery. C. Rivers asked that in the future if we could look at future he would appreciate it. C. Rivers asked about the last time we went out to bid for

transportation. Superintendent Sullivan explained that working with other Superintendents in the area we were able to lock in a good price. C. Rivers also spoke to adding arts programs to all the schools in the district. Assistant Superintendent Kuckel shared with the board that the district has applied for a grant and if awarded it will be fully focused on the Bacon Academy theater to add projection, streaming, revitalizing and audio. S. Tracey-Calash spoke to the historical line budget and how she is not seeing a decrease in the maintenance supplies. M. Millington felt that maybe the line was misread because the Textbook line is down $20,000.00. S. Tracey-Calash asked if line 31 Other Professional and Technical Services could be elaborated on because it was up roughly $50k. Rachel Linkkila explained that this line is used for any company that comes in and provides the district services such as Apex who provides the technology support for the district instead of the district employing its own staff. Barbara Johnson spoke to a switch project at Bacon Academy that is included in this district that is not usually included in the contract. C. Rivers thanked Stephanie on the clarification on the textbooks but still believes that any cost savings that can be found should be added to the maintenance budget. D. Antonacci asked if we are talking about maintenance or capital outlay. C. Rivers explained that he was talking about maintenance and not capital outlay. He believes that if we are seeing a significant savings at the end of year we should try to encumber the funds and take care of some of the projects in the Capital Plan. He explained how in prior years capital outlay, unencumbered funds, the capital reserve worked, and how upcoming projects are going to get paid. D. Antonacci doesn't understand how the Bacon Academy Athletic Complex and the roof will get paid for. Superintendent Sullivan spoke to house bond requests that were sent to Hartford for the district. C. Rivers spoke to his concerns about how the town pays for larger projects within the Town. D. Antonacci said that the turf field is not a Wishlist any more it is for the safety for the children. She also asked how soon would the field be ready. Superintendent Sullivan explained that if it was approved in spring, if a referendum went out in June and if it was for a turf field that the first field would be done in late September early October and the second field by Thanksgiving. D. Antonacci thanked the administrators for everything that they did for today and thanked the public for coming out and speaking. C. River thinks that there is not enough time in this budget cycle. M. Gignac asked the process of the town referendum. Superintendent Sullivan explained that the fields could be bonded or leased depending how the town wants to go. C. Rivers spoke to what the referendum process is in town. S. Tracey-Calash asked if an itemized list of the expenditures for the field. C. Rivers explained that the maintenance committee will be bringing two requests to the board one a payment to have a company price out a total overhaul of Bacon Academy and its systems and another an itemized list of the expenditures for the turf fields.

2.3 *Superintendent Proposed Budget

2.4 *Discussion and Possible Action on the 2024-2025 Budget

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

3.1 For Public Comments, Please See Bylaw on Meeting Conduct – See 2.2a